record, because we have not given a clean chit. The fact is that we have held the Ministry directly responsible for the acts of omission and commission. And therefore, the point that I am making is this-- I quote just one sentence -- "the Ministry of Finance, in our scheme of constitutional jurisprudence, is responsible for the financial health of the economy, including sectors regulated by statutory and other regulators." The regulators are accountable to the Ministry of Finance, which, in turn, is responsible to Parliament. Accountability must go hand-in-hand with autonomy, and the principles governing the responsibility of the Minister of Finance.

All I am saying, Sir, is for the erstwhile Chairman to say -- when the Ministry is responsible to Parliament, through the Minister -- that we have not named the Minister, is, in fact, Sir, accepting the report, that the Ministry is responsible, and the Minister is responsible. And, contrary to the report, to go public, shows that there is an utter disregard of the principles, which the committee itself accepted in its report.

श्री एस0एस0 अहलुवालिया : मुझे भी कुछ बात करनी है।....**(व्यवधान)**

श्री सभापति : क्या बात करेंगे आप। आप बात मत करिए।.....**(व्यवधान)**

श्री एस0एस0 अहलुवालिया : मैं भी कई समितियों का.....**(व्यवधान)**

MR. CHAIRMAN : मैं ऐसा समझता हूं कि ऐसी कोई बात करने की आवश्यकता नहीं है।.....**(व्यवधान)**... The matter ends there....*(Interruptions)*.....

Opening of Retail Sector to F.D.I

SHRI NILOTPAL BASU (West Bengal): Sir, I am very thankful to you for giving me the opportunity to speak. I am constrained to raise this issue at this point in time, because I got the report last night, and there was no scope for a Special Mention. Sir, I draw the attention of the House, through you, to the very serious development regarding opening up of the retail sector to FDI. We have pointed out during the mid-year review discussion also, that employment is a major concern of this country. But the Government, it appears, is changing its stand. The Special Group of Planning Commission, headed by Dr. S. P. Gupta, recommended in May, 2002, that no FDI in retail trade should be allowed, as it would have an adverse impact on employment. This is on page 123 of the report, which says, "Special Group on targeting 10 million employment opportunities per year, Government of India, Planning Commission." Then, the Group of Ministers, based itself on the recommendations of Ministry of Consumer

Affairs, decided not to allow FDI in retail trade. This is reported in the 'Business Standard' of 27th August. Then, the Steering Group of the Planning Commission on FDI, headed by Shri N.K. Singh, recommended not to allow FDI in retail trade. There is another Report called 'Foreign Investment'. This is also a Planning Commission document. On page 46 of the Report, it is stated that FDI will be allowed. But suddenly, we have come to know that the Tenth Plan document, which is going to be discussed by the NDC tomorrow, has a recommendation by a Task Force that FDI be allowed in retail trade. Now, Sir, retail trade gives employment to 2 crore people, and, in the background of the experience of the East Asian and South-East Asian nations, we feel that there will be a drastic cut in employment in this retail sector. Therefore, Sir, we would like to know from the hon. Finance Minister whether he will clear the apprehension.

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): Sir, I will take only a minute. This issue has already been clarified in the other House. There is no such proposal, and the hon. Member is reading far too much in what is after all a document for Plan consideration.

श्री सभापति : कम्पीटिशन बिल लेने से पहले मैं माननीय सदस्यों को सूचित करना चाहता हूं कि आज माननीय प्रधान मंत्री जी द्वारा अकाल के संबंध में दिये गये वक्तव्य पर स्टेटमेंट की बात थी । मैंने क्वेश्चन के समय सब माननीय सदस्यों से रिक्वैस्ट की थी कि यदि कुछ पूछना चाहें तो पूछ लें । अब आप कृपया उसका इंतजार न करें, वह स्टेटमेंट नहीं दिया जाएगा ।

GOVERNMENT BILL

The Competition Bill, 2002

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE (West Bengal): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Sir, for giving me this opportunity to explain my perceptions in this piece of legislation, which was examined and scrutinised by the Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee dealing with Home, Law, Justice and Company Affairs, at that point of time. Sir, while moving the Bill, the hon. Finance Minister pointed out that this Bill was introduced in August, 2001, and referred to the Standing Committee. The Standing Committee presented its Report after it examined it over a period of one full year, in 13 sittings.